

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 125147 TOSEC 130100

FOLLOWING IS REPEAT BUCHAREST 2899, SENT SECSTATE, INFO ATHENS,
ANKARA, BELGRADE, BERLIN, BONN, BUDAPEST, LONDON, MOSCOW,
MUNICH, PARIS, PRAGUE, SOFIA, WARSAW, BERLIN, NATO, DIA, CIA
MAY 21:

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L BUCHAREST 2899

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, MOPS, PINS, PINT, RO, UR

SUBJECT: ROMANIAN PARTIAL ALERT DRILL

REF: (A) STATE 123563; (B) BUCHAREST 2834; (C) BUCHAREST 2828

1. THIS MESSAGE REPORTS FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN APPARENT
ROMANIAN ALERT DRILL - PARTIAL CALL-UP REPORTED REFTELS. DAO MSG
SEPTEL.

2. THE EMBASSY HAS CONTINUED TO AMASS VERIFIED CASES OF ALERT
AND CALLUP MEASURES DURING PAST WEEK. THERE SEEMS LITTLE DOUBT
THAT THESE MEASURES INVOLVED BOTH INITIAL TROOP RESERVIST CALLUPS,
MOBILIZATION AND ALERT OF CIVIL-DEFENSE-RELATED
INDIVIDUALS AND UNITS (FOR EXAMPLE, MEDICAL PERSONNEL)
AND FACTORY AND INSTITUTE-BASED PATRIOTIC GUARDS. WE
HAVE REPORTS ALSO OF YOUTHS IN VILLAGES BEING COMMANDEERED
TO STAND GUARD ON STRATEGIC OBJECTS SUCH AS RAILROADS AND
BRIDGES. ALTHOUGH REPORTS ARE VERY INCOMPLETE FROM PROVINCES,
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THE EXERCISE SEEMS NOT RPT NOT TO HAVE BEEN AS EVIDENT

ELSEWHERE AS EAST OF BUCHAREST (MOLDAVIA AND DOBROGEA).
(THIS JUDGMENT IS TENTATIVE AND SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION PENDING
FURTHER CHECKING). THE SCALE OF MEASURES WAS LIMITED BUT LARGE
ENOUGH
TO TRIGGER WIDESPREAD PUBLIC AWARENESS AND ANXIETY. SUDDENNESS
OF IMPACT AND LACK OF PUBLIC EXPLANATION GAVE RISE TO PLETHORA
OF LURID RUMORS. HOWEVER, SOME
PANIC BUYING AND HOARDING FLURRY EVIDENT IN BUCHAREST (REFTEL B)
HAD DIMINISHED CONSIDERABLY BY MAY 20 AND HAD NOT RPT NOT
SERIOUSLY DISRUPTED NORMAL QUANTITIES OF FOODSTUFFS ON SALE.
WE HAVE BEGUN TO GET REPORTS NOW THAT
INDIVIDUALS MOBILIZED ARE NOW OR WILL SOON BE SENT HOME. SOME
SEMI-OFFICIAL SOURCES ARE BEGINNING TO SAY THAT STANDDOWN WILL
OCCUR IN NEXT FEW DAYS OR "LATE MAY".

3. NO COHERENT COVER

STORY OR EXPLANATION HAS YET BEEN PUT OUT. THEREFORE,
COLORFUL SPECTRUM OF RUMORS HAS HAD FREE PLAY. ESPECIALLY
SINCE MEASURES OCCURRED DURING PATRIOTIC CAMPAIGN, RUMOR
MILL PRODUCED SUCH GEMS AS (FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES
ONLY) (A) FIRING HAD TAKEN PLACE ON BULGARIAN BORDER; (2) SOVIET
TANKS WERE ROLLING SOUTHWEST NEAR IASI; (3) SOVIETS AND BULGARIANS
HAD DELIVERED TERRITORIAL DEMAND OVER DOBROGEA, WITH HUNGARIANS
EYEING TRANSYLVANIA HUNGRILY. SINCE PATRIOTIC-VIGILANCE
CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN CONCOCTED WITH JUST SUCH EVENTUALITIES HOWEVER REMOTE

IN MIND, RUMORS GAINED GREATER CIRCULATION. FOR EXAMPLE, MORE RECENT
RUMOR IS THAT ALERT STEMMED FROM THREE CASES OF SABOTAGE ON
RAILROADS (AT ROSIOR NEAR DANUBE IN OLTENIA WHERE THERE WERE
DERAILMENTS, AT PREDEAL-TIMIS NEAR BRASOV (WHERE THERE WAS A
BAD WRECK LAST YEAR) AND ON BUZAU-CONSTANTA LINE. CERTAIN
MIDDLE-LEVEL OFFICIALS HAVE HINTED THAT EXERCISE FIT IN WITH
DEMONSTRATION TO SOVIETS AND CLIENT REGIMES OF ROMANIA'S
NATIONAL UNITY AND RESOLVE. IF SO, SOVIETS MUST HAVE BEEN
HAPPY TO SEE THAT GENERAL REACTION WAS SHAKINESS AND RUMORS,
NOT IRON DISCIPLINE. SOME DISCONTENT OVER WAY MEASURES
WERE HANDLED PUBLICLY HAS BEEN EXPRESSED TO US BY A RCP CC
MEMBER AND PROMINENT INTELLECTUAL, WHO BLAMED MILITARY, AS IF
EVEN HE HAD NOT BEEN BRIEFED COMPETENTLY. PUBLIC HAS BEEN "SPOOKED"
EVEN MORE THAN DURING "GREAT CORRIDOR SCARE" OR "PLANT ACCIDENT
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CAMPAIGN" OF 1974.

4. SCINTEIA MAY 21, SEEMINGLY NOT BY COINCIDENCE, CARRIED
SIZEABLE STORIES ABOUT ROMANIAN FRIENDSHIP WITH BULGARIA,
HUNGARY AND SOVIET UNION (NOT ALL THAT USUAL), PERHAPS MEANT
TO APPLY A BIT OF BALM TO RUMORS. BUT PUBLICIZED MEETING OF
ROMANIAN AMBASSADOR IN MOSCOW WITH CPSU'S KATUSHEV ON MAY 19
WORKED INVERSELY.

5. IN SUM, WE CONCLUDE THAT MEASURES WERE PURPOSELY
UNANNOUNCED READINESS EXERCISE OR MANEUVERS CALCULATED TO FIT IN
WITH CURRENT PATRIOTIC "VIGILANCE" CAMPAIGN AGAINST
HEGEMONISTS AND THEIR MINIONS. COMBINATION OF CALLUP
WITH DELIBERATELY TENSER ATMOSPHERE AND LACK OF PUBLIC
EXPLANATION OF WHAT WAS GOING ON SPARKED
OVERREACTION BY POPULACE, INCLUDING RUMORS, AS IN
1974 "CORRIDOR" SCARE. WHAT IF ANYTHING FACTUAL WAS BEHIND
RUMOR CLOUD REMAINS FOR SUBSEQUENT ANALYSIS. BARNES
UNQUOTE. ROBINSON

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